

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

O H 13

Arner, Sam

Interviewed By

Patricia Young

January 18, 1980

INTERVIEWEE: SAM ARNER

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

DATE: 18 January 1980

TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

Y: This is an interview with Sam Arner for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project by Patricia Young at Mr. Arner's home on 37665 Bankside Drive in Cathedral City on, let's see, January 18, 1980, at one fifteen in the afternoon.

If you'd like to begin.

A: Well, Pat, I guess, as far as I know, I'm the only pioneer living in Cathedral City now that was here in 1931 when I came. I'll be eighty years old in about six more months also. I came down here from Denver, Colorado, in 1931, a snowbird they call us, you know, in route to San Diego. But the weather in route is pretty bad. It was hailing over Phoenix which was eleven hundred feet higher than here. But when I got to Cathedral City, it was just like summer

There was another fellow with me. He was a fellow from England. He was taking the year off from Cambridge College to see the great American west and see America, I guess. Well, he came down with me, stayed with me a couple of months. And we had, funny, you've heard about people coming to the west in the early days in these Conestoga wagons, well, I had an old Chevrolet car with a four-wheeled canvas schooner, and we slept in the schooner. And we had a little gasoline stove we pulled out and did some cooking, wherever we happened to stop. And that's how we arrived here. Well, when I came here there was only about twenty-eight buildings in town. And I don't think there was more than sixteen or seventeen people all told. And Claude Cobb and his wife Edna had a little grocery store. It looks like it had been started up in a home right across the street a little ways from where I bought a lot. I had one of those old hand pumps, you know, you had to pump it up into a glass container and then if they wanted five gallons, you'd let it come down and stop at the five mark. If they wanted the whole ten gallons, why they'd go right up. And Old Man Allen, he was one of the four subdividers, him and a fellow named Glenn, and, let's see, Glenn . . .

we have a street named after Old Man Allen, Allen Street. And there was a man named Van Fleet, street named after him, and Jack Grove, he has a street named after him, Grove Street. And Glen Plumb, he has two streets named after him. He was a little good-sized man, I guess they named two streets after him, he was pretty big. The Cobbs was head of the grocery store and a couple of pumps outside. They also had the post office, so you had to go in there to get your mail. Now Old Man Allen, he had a little subdivision off of something where the Jack-in-the-Box Drive-in is now and had some cabins across the street. And a fellow named Lynch back there in the early thirties, he, when Roosevelt did away with prohibition, why, he got a license, I guess, to dispense cocktails and things. And he had a place there that seemed to be quite popular at the time. And then they say there was a couple of girls rented one of the cabins from him, and anybody got lonesome, why, they'd come over and talk to the girls, I don't know. (laughter) There were some tragedies in those early days. There was a nice-looking young man, he had a good-looking wife and a couple of children. And they came in another cocktail bar that started up a couple of years later, a few years later,

called the Roundup Cafe. And he was in there one evening and pulled out a gun, and he swung the gun around over the people sitting around the bar and he said, "Any of you people want to go with me?" And nobody offered to go with him and he killed himself. Left a nice-looking wife and two children. I suppose family quarrel of some kind, I don't know, maybe the drink had something to do with it. You know how those things are. And there was another case where there was a lady had a small boy that needed the climate here, and she came up. And she was lonesome, I guess, and she hung out at one of the cocktail bars, another one that started up later, woman owned that one, Ellie Miller. And she killed herself. And when they phoned for the father to come up, why, he came up and he actually killed himself. He had a little boy, I don't know whether it was a relatives or somebody, just a little boy. Now that's just a couple of tragedies in the early days of the town. A town don't have to be big, it seems, to have tragedies. I have run across, in all my travels all over the world, in Mexico and all over the United States, I found in every small town there's some tragedies that can review. Now this sounds like gossip, doesn't it? But I made a

New Year's resolution not to repeat any gossip, so listen carefully the first time. (laughter) Oh, yes, gambling joints came in back there in the early thirties, too. It was against the California law, but the sheriff we had seemed to want to please the hotel guests in Palm Springs and others and they got away with it somehow. They had the Dunes Club, that was quite a fancy place. Al Worthheimer started that one. I think he was a member of the Purple Club of Beachwide, and I don't know how I got out there. I had nothing to do in those days and running around quite a little bit. And I was out there listening to the architect show and heard playing, so I used to build, I don't know why I got out there, but I was. And I was listening in, but that was quite a fancy place. And here's another funny thing, every year when they opened up opening night, the Board of Supervisors of the County were always invited up for opening night, no charge. (laughter)

Y: Gambling hall?

A: Yes, so they all came out to the gambling place, had big dare and everything was sweet for them. Now that don't look very good either, but it showed that the sheriff we had at that time was really very generous to these

gambling joints at Palm Springs Palm Springs

didn't want them in Palm Springs, so they had them start up here. Then they came down and patronized. Another one they called the Hundred Thirty-nine Club, that opened up a couple of years later. And Earl Saucer was a guy that controlled that one. Of course, these other world characters, you know, you never know who's really back of it, but they always had one man in charge. And he ate his first meal at my little lunch counter that I had started up by that time. And he had a guard called Walter Melrose, and when Saucer died, why Melrose came into control of the Hundred ^{Thirty} ~~Ninety~~-nine Club. And he told me once he got a million dollars off that club. That club is now where the Humane Society Thrift Shop is, that building. And in the big lot on this side, the big parking lot, that's where our town library is going to be built. And, let's see, what else I can come up with. Oh, yes. In my little lunch counter I remember some of the, now this was during depression days, you understand, Roosevelt was president and the great depression was on, and things were cheap. Carpenters got about fifty cents, and a finished carpenter would get about seventy-five cents an hour. And in my coffee shop, I had a picture

of the coffee shop with me standing in the doorway and you see right clearly on the window where I'd written with something, coffee, five cents, plate lunch, thirty-five to forty-five cents, imagine. And, let's see, well, *Nellie Coffman* Palm Springs, this was a couple of years before I came, a few years before I came, she had a boarding house and tents on property she had there. People would come up and live in the tents, health seekers, in the wintertime, I guess.

Y: Who was?

A: *Nellie Coffman* ~~Mary Kaufman~~. And that boarding house later on after she built the Desert Inn with the help of a multi-millionaire he was a Texas oil man, I guess. She gave him a home site up back of her land overlooking the town, and in return he helped her to little below built into a very magnificent hotel with scattered cottages, nice cottages, and that was the original Desert Inn. Now that's been supplanted now by, well, a bunch of shops, and I forget what they call them now, sort of a shopping center of some kind. Now that boarding house of hers on the place, that was moved down to Cathedral City eventually. It's a home now on somewhere. That's something else we inherited from them. And the

two-story building with the stairs going up the side, we had to go and pay our water bills, that's been moved down to Cathedral City. Now and it's still down there on the front street somewhere. It's sort of a, well, it's no compliment to the town. I hope somebody tears it down and puts up something pretty anyway. One of the first nice homes that went up was put up by a guy named Banduchi. He was a relative of the man who owned the Bank of Italy. I think it was in World War II that he changed that from the Bank of Italy to Bank of America because Bank of Italy didn't sound very good because Italy was lined up with Hitler, you know, at that time. Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you that right across from Cobb's Grocery Store and their two little pumps was a pretty good little home there. It was built out of, I think it was built out of small concrete ^{blocks} ~~box~~ with a tile roof, and Kay Price owned that. They gave her a free lot; she was building a home there. She was one of the silent day movie actresses, you know, before they had sound. And she played with the Cullihans and Kellys. Now you wouldn't remember anything about that. But I happened to have one of her movies. Kate, the Cab Man was the name. I showed it once down at the town hall years ago.

The town here was subdivided in 1927, about four years before I came, but it didn't grow very fast.

Y: Who had subdivided it?

A: Van Fleet and Jack Grove and Old Man George Allen and F. L. Glenn Plumbley, the four of them.

Y: When you say subdivided, what does that mean? They bought all the property around here?

A: Well, they bought, let's see, I think originally they bought about a half a section of a quarter section from the Southern Pacific Railroad. And for two and a half dollars an acre, and then they tied it into lots such as we have down there now. The highway going through wasn't directly east or west, but they cut the lots north and south and created a lot of triangles that you see here and there. Sort of confusing, some of them. Okay, what else have we got here? The nearest Justice of the Peace at that time when I came was up in Banning. You had to go all the way to Banning to put a claim in at Small Claims Court. And there wasn't any children in the community. The first kid born there was in 1936. That would be my boy Paul, my oldest boy. Any kids old enough to go to high school in Palm Springs had to be bussed all the way to Banning where they had a high school.

And if I remember correctly I had to go to Dell Lumber Company in Banning to buy lumber to start my first building. I think a builders supply came along a year or two later after that. We used to have old-fashioned dancing in the Frances Stephens Grade School in Palm Springs on Saturday evenings. And us commoners had a chance to dance with the movie stars who occasionally came up that way. I think this was around 1934 and 1935. The movie stars didn't have anything to go to either. (laughter) That was the best they could do. I think I have a homestead back of Cathedral City about 1933, stayed up there until 1936 or 1937 at a hundred and sixty acre homestead. And I had some, hired some fellows to put up a few cottages up there to rent out. And had a very high-classed sign down by the road where the stone arch, they had a stone arch down there, and it looked like a high-classed sign out. It was called Casa Del Monte Guest Ranch. I got cars going up there with negro chauffeurs, colored chauffeurs I should say, I guess, and when they went up there, they said, well, you have a wonderful view here and if you had better facilities, why we'd like to stay. But even at that, I got some very interesting guests up there, and one of them was

Eddie O'Shea, a heavyweight prizefighter who was in training to fight ^a ~~to~~ heavyweight champion of Mexico.

A fellow, I forget this guy's name, he had something to do with Ziegfield Follies, but was out of work at the time, he was his manager. And they lived up there a number of months. Then Bret Hart's aged daughter Ethel, you've heard of Bret Hart, the early writer, well now, this Eddie's daughter Ethel and a friend of hers, the wife of the Finnish military attache, the Finnish consulate in New York, they stayed up there for part of a winter. And they liked it regardless of the fact that it was quite rustic, you know, and a lot of inconveniences. The Stanford University professor's wife and ailing daughter, they stayed up there one winter for the girl's health. And it was a movie script writer and his wife stayed up there most of the winter once. She would walk all the way downtown a mile and walk back with groceries. She wanted the exercise, see.

Y: Where was this located?

A: It was right back of Cathedral City, at the end of Dorey Road and across the wash off to the left.

Y: What's become of it now?

A: I understand that it's in escrow. I donated it to

World Literature Crusade Trust Department. And I'll get an annuity from it for life and my wife will, too, if it goes through escrow. It's sort of an additional escrow right now depending on whether the County will give the man, the developer, all the permits he needs. It seems that it takes two or three years sometimes before these developers to get the clear signal, you know. There's one funny thing here happened. I had a big outside john, you know, with a regular toilet seat. And it had a double fence around it made of date leaves. And everybody used that. (laughter) I carried water up for them and they used double mantle oil lamps. And we had a guy there, he had a girlfriend downtown that was an artist, and one of the older girls, I suppose she was about thirty-eight or thirty-nine. And he was the first guy that I learned anything about vitamins from. And he was selling very valuable vitamins and tomatoes. He wouldn't say tomatoes, it was always tomatoes. And he was a, said that he was a friend of, who was that famous dancer over there in Paris that got killed? Her scarf went out the window wrapped around the wheels and choked her to death. Do you remember anything about that?

Y: No.

A: By the name of Castle or something like that. Well, anyway, he was a good friend of hers, he said. Well, a friend of mine and I drove up once to my homestead shack and he liked to run around in the nude there. There wasn't any buildings down below at all. Nobody down there could look up and see anything at all because Sun Air tract hadn't been built yet. You couldn't see a single house below you. And he used to run around there a little bit in the nude when I was busy downtown all day with my lunch counter or whatever I had there. And we drove up there once, we caught him by surprise. He was just going into the john. And so we thought we'd have some fun. We sat outside out there in front of my shack looking down waiting for him to come out of the john. (laughter) And we waited and waited and waited, and we thought, that guy's never going to come out of that john. So I went on down to investigate. Know what that guy did? He had gone around the back end of the thing and separated enough of the date leaf leaves to crawl out, and he kept the john between us and his cabin down below, and so he got back safely. (laughter) I got a big kick out of that. I guess we were the ones that got fooled, though. I don't know whether I should

have put that in or not, but that was just a funny incident. Let's see. Oh, this guy came down with me. I finally bought a lot in Cathedral City from Old Man Allen. He had a sign on it, best lot in Cathedral City.

And it's the only one in town that had a sidewalk in front of it and on the one side. And I believed the sign, it really was. I was in Palm Springs trying to buy something downtown there and it was ten thousand dollars a lot even in 1931. So I couldn't afford that. And so I came down and went in debt for this seven hundred dollar lot. (laughter)

And then I went up to the Dell Lumber Company in Banning and got lumber on time. I had a little income and then we started to build this first building that I had there. And Harvey Young, this is the guy's name by me, he stayed with me two or three months there, and I paid the bills. And he helped me a little bit every day. But he went down to Los Angeles once and got a big kick out of Pershing Square where people would get up and give a speech, you know. And if they could get anybody to listen to them. And he says, you know, we have that same thing over in London. I think he called it Piccadilly Square or something. They have the same thing, he said.

And he had an uncle in New York that sent him money to buy a little Austin car, new one, so he finally drove back to New York City. And I haven't seen him since then. I've often wondered what become of that guy. Wish he'd write to me. He might be dead now. He might have been killed in World War II something, I don't know. Now, let's see, what else can I remember? Oh, yes, Jimmy Swinnerton a very famous comic-strip artist. I bet he originated the comic strip, and they first came out in the ^{ea}Hurst papers. And Jimmy, he was quite a good artist, too. Landscape artist and things. And he liked that country up there, that Indian country. And up around where the Navaho reservation is and the trading post at Cameron. And he used to drop in my real estate office. This was some years later, of course, when I had real estate office, in the same building, though. I went from San Jacinto studio to lunch counter to groceries and outside rustic gas station, and then into real estate. Quite an evolution there of some kind. Well, Jimmy never kept a journal. I was surprised. I said, with the stories you tell me, you'd have a very interesting journal. No, he wouldn't do that. He told me once, while he was up in the Navaho reservation, he

got acquainted with a lot of Indians up there, there was two Americans on horseback and that they were prospectors. And they came out to the reservation prospecting for gold. The Indians told them they didn't want them there; they didn't want anybody prospecting on their reservation. But they were insistent, and these two fellows in trying to cross a little stream or something, it was all quicksand. And their horses started to go down in the quicksand with them up on top of the horses, and they got stuck and they were going down, down, down into that quicksand and covered their heads, the horses and them, too. And they yelled for the Indians to help them. The Indian chief said no. You come up here, we didn't want you here, and you get what's coming to you. And they're probably down there today, those same fellows, in that quicksand bed. That was one of the stories he told me. Now then there's another story, and this is really funny. There was an old, I think one was the chief, or just an old Indian, but he got ill and he went to the hospital. I think there was a little church hospital or something up on that Indian reservation. And Jimmy went around, I think it was Jimmy that went around, or a friend of his, went around to see him. And he saw

this Indian eating, boy, did he eat. He had a tremendous appetite and he was supposed to be sick, you know. There he was eating tremendous. So this fellow told the Indian, he said, man alive, I wished I had your appetite. And the Indian said, he says, when white man first come takes our land. Now he wants our appetite. (laughter) Oh, dear. Well, in the old days we had, when it was quite dry around here and quite hot in the summer without any coolers or anything. We had some arthritis victims come in once in awhile on crutches. And being out did them so much good that a lot of them were here a few months on crutches and they got well enough to do away with their crutches. And some of them started to work. And one woman had a cat that couldn't open its claws, arthritis. And it was up here a couple of months and it was able to close up its claws again. One of those men who was quite well known was the razor king, Gillette, you know. He built a home in Palm Springs and he also started raising dates down here at the Palm Desert. The Gillette Ranch, and he had a swimming pool there and that was the source of his irrigation water. And he let some of us kids in the summertime go down there and swim in this swimming pool, irrigation pool.

And I remember that very clearly.

Y: Where was that?

A: It was on the northern edge of Palm Desert across from the highway and on down a little bit. Those trees may be still there, I don't know. I just don't know. They've had so many changes down there recently.

Y: The Gillette Ranch.

A: Just figured there was a swimming pool there and he had water coming into it from one side, and the water running out was used to irrigate his date trees. I think he had about five acres or ten acres of dates.

Y: Was there anything else around that area?

A: No. I can tell you a little bit about that now. Get this thing going there. I don't see it turning. Oh, well, this and now with what we have there now fifty years later. Be fifty years I used to drive down to Indio once in awhile in the early days there, early thirties, and I'd see that great big cove where Palm Desert is now. Wasn't a thing on it back up in there. And I thought to myself, some day there will be a city here. I had an intuition, a feeling, a strong feeling, that they would be a city there some day. Now practically almost fifty years later, why there is a city there now.

Going over pretty good. I remember General Patton's tank, his tank corps, was doing battle maneuvers over at Desert Center. But so many of those tanks got beaten up, you know, that they brought them over and lined them up along the roads where Palm Desert is now. And that's where the mechanics worked and tried to repair^s them. I do remember that. And one of the mechanics rented one of my cabins in Cathedral City and ruined my cesspool because he had so much grease on him. It got in the cesspool and clogged up the sand. I had to dig another one. (chuckle) That happens. In those early days, 1931, 1932, we didn't have air conditioning, you know. I don't think they had them invented yet. Now down in Indio they had, some people had a little submarine, what they called submarines. It was sort of a little hut like, you know, with an oval top. And it had a water pipe with holes in it dripping down on the roof which was covered with burlap. And the burlap would go down the sides and if they'd open the window on one side and on another side, if there was any breeze at all, that wet burlap would get a little cool air in them. And that was a long time ago. They finally got some air conditioners with the wood shavings or whatever they

put in the sides, those mats, and the water would run down the top, run out on the ground, and that helped some. Later on they had them fixed so they had little pumps in them which would pump the water back up into the trough around the top and use the same water over and over again instead of having it go out on the ground. But that was a sort of a revolutionary process. Now, of course, we've got the electric refrigeration which is the best because it takes the humidity out of the house instead of bringing it in. Like the swamp coolers would bring it in. We had lots of snakes and scorpions in Cathedral City in those early days, and I guess the people in the valley had them too. I remember a fellow and I were sitting on the steps of my little lunch counter once, on the steps that led to the back end of the building, and here coming through the front door was a sidewinder headed right for us. I don't know what he had in mind, but he wanted to get in where it was a little cooler, I guess. Then there was a little dog barking like everything at the back end of my building once, and there was a sidewinder there. But he let me know about it. I might have got bit if I'd went in without the dog. There were tarantulas and yellow scorpions also.

But we don't see those anymore. They had sense enough to move away when cars and noise and people increased, you know. Well there's in the early days besides the two gambling houses, there was a bookie. And every kid in town knew where the bookie was. And the telephone company even had a special switchboard put in there to take the bet calls. Now I guess some of the people wanted the sheriff about it down in Riverside to enforce the law on bookies. So he sent up a couple of inspectors, spent a day or two up there, and they went back and reported that they had found no evidence of a bookie. (chuckle) So there's some more, that's the way government works when gambling is controlled by

special We see it in Washington and Sacramento and God speaks against it in His book. I've been reading that lately. And it speaks of judgment that come on all such evil forces and bad government leaders. Let's see what else we have here. Well, it looks like I'm just about at the end of this. And it's a little bit on the preaching side. I have a theological diploma. I used to preach some. It's not a legal diploma but I found out that at the time I was ready for the State bar examination here that them lawyers wasn't making

any more than I was at my service station and grocery store. And so I figured why should I get mixed up with everybody's troubles and maybe have somebody come to me to try to get them from getting into jail, and I didn't feel like that I was a better prosecutor because I figure if they got themselves into trouble, a jail term which would be good for them. But God's law to Moses, /he gave Moses, as near as I can remember, demanded death to rapists, adulterers, homosexuals, and lesbians and people who had sex with animals. And that was the law. They were supposed to kill them. I notice seventy elders, if I remember, in the Sanhedrin, and the Sanhedrin was supposed to be the ones, stoned them to death for these sins. But man's laws counteract God's laws, so we had an ever increasing element of corruption in the nation which would eventually destroy us and bring God's judgments on us. Looks like the atheistic will be used by God to take our freedom from us as he used the Assyrians to take away the freedom of Israel when they committed the same things that we are committing. In the book of Jeremiah I read a couple of days ago where God promised to spare the city of Jerusalem if they could find one honest man in the city. They

couldn't. The people in business were so crooked, couldn't find one honest man, so God put it in the heart of who it was Nebuchadnezzar or or one of them to come in with their armies and they besieged the city and destroyed it, walls and everything in it. It was about maybe ten percent of the people who lived out on little farms and vineyards were left alone, but they destroyed the cities. And they took the people that didn't, the people that escaped from the battles were taken over to Babylon, I believe it was, for seventy years. Now some people think that something like that is going to happen to us over here because of the, we've got seventeen million homosexuals they say. In Berlin before it was destroyed, there were sixty thousand men married to sixty thousand men. And our American and allied forces destroyed the city of Berlin. It was God's judgment on them. And it reminds you of Sodom and Gomorrah, of that place there. Now a lot of people don't know this, but in the darkest days of the American revolution, at Valley Forge, where the men were almost starving, didn't have shoes to protect their feet from the snow, an angel appeared to Washington and showed him the future destiny

of the United States. And I have here an account of that angel and what he told Washington, or what she told Washington. He looked on her as a beautiful female when he relates this. So I don't know whether they have female angels or whether they're all he angels, I don't know. Maybe we have both.

Y: Those people were living here.

A: Well, now, in the early days there were nice elderly people who were able to spend the winters here. And they were a very fine class of people, they really were. They didn't even have to lock their doors at night. And we never had any crime or trouble down here of any kind in the early days. And, of course, those people were elderly people, and as they died off, in time, their houses were sold or maybe to somebody else and they rented them out or lived in them. And most of those older homes at that time are rented out to Mexicans and a more prosperous class of people have built homes back in this Sun Air district in the Charlesworth tract. And we have some of the more prosperous Mexican-Americans who occasionally are able to buy a home back up in here, too. But most of them are, I would say, middle class Americans who have good jobs or some retired

doctors or judges or somebody like that. We've had retired doctors and retired judges and people like that, too, back up in this general area here. It's a nice view of the mountains here. You can see there. A new swimming pool right there with the wall around it, the fence. Everybody that's been here admires the view.

Y: Where did you live, I assume you're fairly recent to this particular home, where were you before?

A: Well, have a downtown, I own a bunch of business buildings down there. And you know the land where the liquor store is? Very beautiful building. Bill ^{COTY} Coty built that for me for the Germain brothers who had a couple of little stores up around Banning Beaumont. And they made me a pretty good offer if I'd build down there, so I went ahead. And I had, Bill ^d Coty was the architect on it, and Wexler and Harrison, another firm of architects, they remodeled all the boards I had in there and I think I've got about the nicest looking business buildings there between His and Her Cafe on the corner. It would grace Palm Springs downtown area, I believe. Better than a lot of things they have down there. Palm Springs was so shabby, the front streets, when I came. And a lot of the little shacks were torn

down and better buildings were put up. So we're going through that process here in Cathedral City. There are a lot of the old places being torn down better places going up, you know. And that's happening all the time. Down there in the Date Palm Shopping Center there's a cabinet shop and an electric shop, I think, in front, and the rest of it was a trailer court, King's Trailer Court. Well, that's all given way now to beautiful shopping center. And so that's the way it goes. On the corner down there, there's a gasoline station has been done away with and Carl's Drive-in is there. And some other places on the other side of Carl's Drive-in have been torn down and cleared away and there's room there now for another development. They say something's coming in there. I don't know just what. I hope it's a McDonald's of a I have to go to Palm Springs if I want to patronize either one of those two. But, oh, yes, right now there's a two-million-dollar office building going up there right across from the Jack-in-the-Box restaurant, drive-in, whatever you call it. That's quite a large investment there. And then the Sun Air Shopping Center, that's going in a couple of years ago. Security Pacific Bank is on one end of it

and then there's a Market Basket next. And there's a series of shops there that read like Palm Springs. They're branches of Palm Springs, good many branches of Palm Springs buildings or businesses. And Santa Fe Savings and Loan is on the end of it, of that now sets there. But anybody who knows buildings can look out over the desert, it's up high enough that you can look out over the desert there with a nice view. Then back of that we have a lot of nice apartment houses. And I was surprised when we came up here, we had to drive through them to get up here, and I was surprised at the number of nice apartment houses and things have gone up recently, in the recent years. So we're coming along real good here. And I'm glad to see it because I've been waiting for it for almost fifty years.

Y: Did you stay year round?

A: I very seldom did. I spent two or three summers here, but I usually got out in the summer, but everybody else did, too. There wasn't any business in the summertime. Even in Palm Springs it was slow. You'd see a few cars parked at the curbs, just a few, I mean a few. And so it's just been since World War II that things have developed rapidly and there's been more business all

the year round. But there are still some of the small individual businesses in Cathedral City that have told me, we consider ourselves lucky if we just make expenses in the summer until the things get liven in the winter. But I think that it's going to be better every year because of the increase in the population. That's the way things go. Two weeks in Tucson, same way in the early days. They're pretty busy all year round now over there in Arizona. Those two towns, industry and different things. And we'll probably get more and more clean industry down there, too. Got the ^{Bird} ~~Burr~~ Corporation. They manufacture things. And anything that's clean and doesn't pollute the air, why there's places for them. They create jobs and business. Oh, yes, they're speaking of trying to incorporate again in this town. I don't know how they'll come out on that. I haven't been reading in the papers that they're going to make another attempt to incorporate. I don't know just what incorporation could, might do for the town. They say there's seventy-five hundred people here now in the prescribed Cathedral City area. So I don't know. It seems that Palm Desert has got a lot of things that have come in since they've incorporated. I don't know whether

they would have come in anyway or not. And the same is true of Rancho Mirage. I don't know whether the . . .

I notice that some of the leaders in the incorporation attempt own pretty good sized holdings that, you know, that they want to protect and develop. And the homeowners that don't own anything except their homes, and probably a job somewhere, I don't know whether they're going to react to it, whether they think that we're better off with the county or not, rather than inexperienced local businessmen. And, of course, the county has officials who are been there for years and who are experts in many lines of government. And I think probably they would be more impartial. You know, it's funny, about small cities when they incorporate, there's always so many clicks. One guy used to, here's a click and they're against that click and maybe here's a businessman that don't like another businessman, he'd try to put him at a disadvantage if he can. And those things. You never hear any of those quarrels or things in Cathedral City. You hear about in Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert and Palm Springs, you know. Click quarrels. Group quarrels. But here it's peaceful and quiet. I

like that part of it. I don't know whether if they incorporate, we're going to have the same quarrels and things that these other towns have or not. There's always somebody going to get hurt by some new city law or something, you know. And then there's people that sometimes, that will try to fight their own winners and they work pretty hard to develop their own land that isn't developed yet and their own business interests, all that. I don't blame them for trying to protect their own businesses, trying to develop more of them. It's just part of the democratic process, I guess. So then I'm sort of keeping clear of it now. I used to, when taxes were four dollars and fifty cents a hundred here years ago, I was for incorporation. And then they got up to eleven dollars and fifty cents a hundred, that's before Proposition 13, why then I was against it because I felt we were better off in the county. They keep their streets up real good, better than some of the streets in Palm Springs that I've seen, and they give us more or less impartial service. They're far enough away that they don't know people personally. They don't try to hurt anybody. But I don't know. I don't own so much property anymore, don't have so many

taxes to pay. I was paying about forty-nine hundred dollars a year taxes there for awhile. Tax proposition is the big thing. I understand in Palm Desert that, doesn't have a property tax yet. There's enough tax in the property, people's property. If they can keep from, you know, if they don't have to make money for city government by taxing their property, that sometimes makes incorporation a little more agreeable. I never felt that they should tax businesses, business license, because the business people are there to serve the public. And why should they punish them by putting a business tax on them? In Palm Springs they have bed taxes. Everybody that's in the rental business, so much a bed. Well, we have in Cathedral City, we have widows, you know, that have inherited from their husbands who've died who have maybe five or six little cottages that they rent out. Now if they had to pay a tax on every bed they've got in there, it seems to me like it's going a little too far.

Y: This is true today, you're saying, that there are a lot of widows that rent out cottages here?

A: Well, we have a number of them in Cathedral City. Now I'm not in close touch with things like I used to be,

but I used to know a number of them who were widows, their husbands died before they did, and they were left with these rentals as their main source of income, you know. And I hated to see a business tax put on them because they're here to serve tourists and to provide accommodations for people. I didn't see any sense in taxing them.

Y: Tell me about your lunch counter. Were there any other places, were you the place that made the great chicken?

A: No. (laughter) Prospector's delight was my favorite. I concocted that myself, and I get a can of beans, baked beans, and I'd put it in a frying pan and heat it up, you know, make the beans good. And then get another pan and I'd have three or four slices of bacon, crisp, put that on top of the beans, and then maybe an egg, easy over. Put that on top of everything else. But in the beans, before we put anything on top of the beans, we'd cut up some kernels of garlic. Oh, boy, did that taste good when you bit into one of those little round coons the size of a pea, you know. And we had prospectors in those days around the area. And I called it prospector's delight. (chuckle) I don't remember whether their garlic proved them to be a nuisance to anybody else.

No, I never gave it a second thought. I ate it myself and loved it. (chuckle) But now today I would consider probably the, I would want to look into it if it was offending anybody.

Y: Did you have any competition in town in terms of other places?

A: At that time? Oh, the woman down there where the real estate offices is today, where Auto Realty Company was in there. I forget, there's somebody else in there now. There was a lady there with two girls, and she had a little restaurant in there. And when beer came in, near beer or beer, why they sold a little beer in there, and had some kind of a little restaurant in there. But that was about it.

Y: What kind of people would come by?

A: Oh (chuckle) convicts, businessmen, nice people, bad people, just about the general run. Driving through, you know, heading for different places. I think most of them kept to the main highway if they were driving east rather than coming down this way because we had a little road there that wasn't very wide. If you stop in at Casey's Code No. 7 Cafe in Cathedral City, just down from the lamp post building, just a half a block on the righthand

side, I had pictures there of early Cathedral City showing Cobb's store and Kate Price's little home and all that.

Y: Go ahead. Go ahead.

A: Over there is a paved road goes up there. You can see the black pavement, and then in back of those hills there, it divides into three different gravel roads. And you can see people go up there once in awhile, kids and others, and my boy John and his friend, they went up this path here. And they said those three big, what looks like stumps up there, they said that those are ancient fossil trunks of trees. I couldn't hardly believe it. You could see the three pillars going up in the air. They said they were (phone rings) fossilized . . .

Y: Is this a new development that's going in next to Cathedral Canyon? (phone rings)

A: No. I'll tell you what this was. (phone rings) This was the Boise (phone rings)

Y: You better get this.

A: This was the point, this was the Boise Cascade Company. They were going to put trailers up in there, and those mountains are older than our over here, my homestead. The where my homestead is, they say

they're millions of years older than these, but these
are older than all the others southward.

Mrs. A: Sam.

A: What.

Mrs. A: Dean Hazelton is on the phone.

A: Oh

Mrs. A: You better go back in the bedroom.